TESTIMONY OF FOSTER WILSON AND A. M. McCOMAS, IN REGARD TO LOGAN COUNTY INVASION, TAKEN AT HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA, DECEMBER 16, 1921.

MARION H. RICHARDSON
SHORTHAND REPORTER
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

TESTIMONY OF FOSTER WILSON AND A. M. McCOMAS, TAKEN IN HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA, DECEMBER 16, 1921.

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FOSTER WILSON, a witness of lawful age, being by me first duly sworn, deposed as follows:

BY MR. C. W. OSENTON.

Q. State your name?

A. Foster Elmer Wilson.

Q. Where do you live, Mr. Wilson?

A. Jeffery, Boone County, West Virginia.

Q. How old are you?

A. I will be 24--

Q. Your next birthday?

A. Yes, sir, my next birthday, next January.

Q. Were you a member of the United Mine Workers of America in August of this year?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What local did you belong to, Mr. Wilson?

A. I don't know the number of it, but it was at Seacoal there, plant of Standard Eagle Coal Company.

Q. Do you recall the assembling of a large number of

men at Marmet that afterwards marched up Coal River into Logan County? Do you remember that in August?

A. One march came to Madison, is all I know of, and the rest of them come in on the train?

Q. You remember the occasion? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was you at Marmet at anytime while the men were assembled, before they started marching?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you go with any of the marchers?

A. No, sir.

Q. At no time? A. No, sir.

Q. What part, if any, did you take in the march to Logan County?

A. Not any at all-- only-- well, I don't reckon you would call it a march. Well--

Q. Well, the men that went out there, I mean. The invasion of Logan County.

A. I live in about four or five miles, I guess, of where the fighting took place, and they was all up in them hollows everywhere, the men were all around up in there wherever you would go, you would see a bunch of men.

Q. Were you up there at the foot of Blair Mountain where they had their camp at anytime?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you recognize any of the men that you saw with guns, if so, who were they?

A. I don't recollect of any one.

Q. No one at all?

A. No.

Q. Did you see nobody going with guns to shoot these men?

A. Yes, I seen lots of them, but I don't know who they were, they were in automobiles and such as that.

Q. There were a number of men that went from Jeffery, that we had evidence about, do you know any of them?

A. What went from Jeffery went after the rest of them was up there.

Q. Anytime, I don't care when they went, what men went from Jeffery?

A. Lewis White is the only one I know of. He was from Laurel City.

Q. Did you see him going?

A. I seen him take a gun away from a fellow up there in the hollow. I was going back--

Q. Where had you been?

A. I went up there one morning and the fighting took place, and I didn't have anything only my fists, and I didn't think I had any business there.

Q. Where were you, did you see any fighting?

A. No, sir.

Q. What point did you go to?

A. I wasn't on the point, I was in the creek.

Q. Where did you go to?

A. Crooked Creek. It was in the head of Crooked Creek and Hewitt.

Q. How many men did you see there?

A. I don't know.

Q. 100 or was it more?

A. There were a lot of them, I couldn't tell how many.

Q. Armed, any of them?

A. A lot of them were armed, I don't know who they were.

Q. Who went with you up there?

A. I went up on a truck with Tose Sanders.

Q. Where does he work?

A. He lives in Jeffery, he doesn't work anywhere.

Q. How long has he lived there in Jeffery?

A. About two years.

Q. And you don't know his name?

A. That is all I ever heard him called, was Tose Sanders.

Q. Is he white or colored?

A. He is white.

Q. Who drove the truck the morning you went up?

A. Tose, himself.

Q. How many were in the truck with you?

A. I don't know.

Q. About how many where there, 10 or 20, where were

they from?

A. They were strangers to me.

Q. How did you happen to go with them, if you didn't happen to have a gun?

A. I just went up there to see what was going on. I live there, and the fighting took place--

Q. Was you there when the fighting took place?

A. I heard the shooting.

Q. Do you remember what day that was?

A. No, sir, I don't. I couldn't say.

Q. Have you no way of refreshing your memory?

A. No, sir.

Q. Now, on all that trip, you went up there and saw all those men and can't remember any of them?

A. I just on the main hill.

Q. Did you see anybody else there from Jeffery?

A. Not as I know of. That there fellow I told you--

Q. Who was he?

A. R.B. Robinson, I believe, I will look at my receipt, and can tell you what it is. G.B. Rodgers.

Q. Did he hold any position with the United Mine Workers, Rodgers?

A. He was a member.

Q. Same lodge you belong to?

A. He belongs to the same lodge I belong to.

Q. Was he an officer of any kind?

A. I don't know, he didn't belong where I do.

Q. Now, before this march came up there and these men came up there, didn't you fellows have this up in the local and discuss things?

A. They has some mass meetings.

Q. Was Keeney or Mooney present? Do you know Frank Keeney? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know Mooney? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were they up there at any of your mass meetings?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you ever see either one of them up there while this trouble was going in?

A. Not only the time they come to Madison and turned that bunch back, was the only time I seen them.

Q. Didn't a lot of them go on even after that?

A. No, sir, not that I know of.

Q. Did you hear Keeney and Mooney say anything after they made their speeches, about going ahead?

A. I got there after they made their speeches, and he said "Boyd, it is an evident fact you can't fight Federal troops".

Q. Who told you that, Keeney or Mooney?

A. Keeney or Mooney one, I don't just know which one it was, but it was one of them.

Q. Were they both together at that time?

A. They were there at the depot.

Q. What did they say about the boys going on?

A. They turned them back.

Q. This was after they turned the fellows back?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Didn't your locals have some meetings about that time up there, and didn't you raise some funds to buy arms and things of that kind, out of your local?

A. Not as I know of.

Q. Weren't you assessed to get arms?

A. No, sir.

Q. Ammunition?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was anything said in your locals about joining and helping these fellows?

A. Not that I know of.

Q. Did you hear any of these men while you were at that place say what they were going to Logan or Mingo for?

A. No, I never heard them say what they were going there for, but if I got the right understanding of it, it was because they were treating those miners so at Mingo.

Q. Mingo. Well, you heard them discuss they were going over there to release the miners?

A. No, I never heard them say they were going to release them.

Q. What did you hear them say about raising Morgan's martial law?

A. Not anything that I know of.

Q. Now, after Keeney and Mooney was there you all went over and had a meeting at Laurel City, didn't you, after they made their speech?

A. I went down to Madison to see who all was there, to see how many people was there, it is just a little piece below my house, where I live, and they got orders to go back home and everybody to go home, you know, that it was all over, that there would not be any more of it. Well, that night I went back up and he told somebody to tell everybody to go home.

Q. Who told them to go home, Keeney and Mooney?

A. Yes, sir. Said it was all over, there wouldn't be any more of it.

Q. Well, you went back to Laurel City that night, what happened then?

A. I went home. I didn't go to Laurel City.

Q. What do you know about that meeting up there, and the men getting instructions to go on?

A. I don't know of them getting any more instructions. They told them to go home. It was all over with.

Q. Tell us about that.

A. Well, I couldn't tell you, but they went and talked some.

Q. Tell us what you all agreed to do there at that meeting?

A. I didn't agree to do anything, they appointed a couple of fellows--

Q. Who were they?

A. Rodgers was one of them.

Q. One was this man Rodgers, and who was the other?

A. That is all I rdcollect that went I knew, he went and come back.

Q. What did he report when he come back?

A. I couldn't say.

Q. What did the men do when he got back?

A. I think they had a call meeting.

Q. Did you attend that meeting? A. No, sir.

Q. After that meeting, what did they do?

A. Th.t was before that march, I reckon, I don't know whether it was or not.

Q. What do you know they went to Charleston to find out about?

A. They went to Charleston to see if they were going to fight, I reckon.

Q. Tell us what they were talking about, what you said and what you heard the other people say?

A. I never said anything.

Q. What did the others say?

A. This has been a long time, I don't recollect so much of it. There were so many men talking, I couldn't tell you what they said.

Q. They went to Charleston to find out what?

A. I don't know what, I didn't attend the mass meeting at all.

Q. Where is this man Rodgers?

A. I don't know. They run him out.

Q. He lived at Jefferys, did he?

A. No, sir, at Laurel City.

Q. Did you hear about them killing the deputy sheriff?

A. John Gore? Yes.

Q. When did you hear of it, that same morning?

A. That was on Blair Hill, and I never was up there.

Q. Did you hear it the morning you went up there in the truck?

A. No, sir, that was in the first of the battle, and the battle had been on a few days before they killed John Gore.

Q. Who told you about John Gore being killed?

A. I don't know. I am telling you the truth, everything I know.

Q. It is a very funny thing that you can know anything and can't remember any of it. It is your part to tell me what you know about it. It is funny you would attend the meeting and see all these people and can't remember anybody or anything they said.

Q. You know you asked me who all I seen with guns and I told you.

Q. You could not remember a man. You said you saw Lewis White take a gun away from a man.

A. That is all I know.

Q. What did you hear Lewis say he was going to do with it?

A. He said "By God, come on, lets go".

Q. Who was the man he took the gun from?

A. I don't know him.

Q. White or black? A. White.

Q. Never saw him before or since?

A. No, sir.

Q. Why did he take the gun away from him?

A. He said, "If you go back, leave your gun."

Q. You say they appointed a committee to go to Charleston, and you do not know what they went to see about?

A. Said they were going to headquarters, that is all I know.

Q. What did they report back home?

A. I don't know.

Q. You ought to remember what went on at the mass meeting. You ought to remember something?

A. Well, Uncle (speaking to Uncle in the room) I can't tell you what all went on.

Q. What did you hear them say they were going to Mingo for?

A. Well, I heard some of them say they were going

there to Mingo, and I don't know what they were going to do.

Q. What were they going to do in Logan?

A. I don't know.

Q. What did you hear them say they were going to do?

A. They never talked much in that mass meeting about that, and I wasn't at the mass meeting.

Q. They assessed all of you at the local to buy arms?

A. I hadn't worked any for a long time.

Q. Who is president of the local you belong to?

A. He is a colored man, been elected since I left there.

Q. I am talking about the man who was President at the time you were up there. Haven't you a card that shows his name?

A. Not a union card. This is a Moose card I have.

Q. Who is the Secretary and Treasurer at the time this march took place. You certainly ought to know who is President and Secretary of your local.

A. I just worked there four days, and I didn't get to know them.

Q. Who was the President of the local of Beech, and Secretary when you were there?

A. A fellow by the name of Kiser. I don't know what his first name is. Let's see- Clive Holt was at the head of it.

Q. Well, you belonged to that local, didn't you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long did you belong to it before you left there the four days before?

A. I belonged to that one at No. 2 about 9 months.

Q. And you don't know the name of the President of the Local?

Q. Well, they didn't call their first names. Just say "Mr. Kiser", that is all I know. He was a check weighman at No. 2 Beech

Q. What did you do, mine?

A. Yes, sir, run a motor mostly at night I worked. He worked in the daytime. I don't know his first name.

Q. Did you see any of these men from there the day you went. Did you see any of them you knew in the crowd?

A. No, sir. No, I didn't. You know that White was the captain of the bunch, I heard that.

Q. Lewis White?

A. Lewis White, he was a captain.

Q. What did you hear him say they were going to Mingo for?

A. I heard them say that they were going toeat supper in Logan.

Q. What did they say about Don Chafin and his thugs. Did you hear them say anything about that?

A. I reckon they were going to kill him.

Q. Tell us something you heard some of them say about it?

A. I couldn't tell you the names.

Q. What did you hear them say generally in the crowd?

A. They were going to kill him.

Q. What did they say they were going to do with the other fellows that tried to stop them?

A. I never heard them say.

Q. Well, they wasn't all strangers that went up in the crowd. Anybody else you see up there in that crowd except Lewis White that you knew?

A. Daddy Snider-- George Snider was up to the main hollow.

Q. Who else did you see up there?

A. I might sit here and study and think of them after a while, but it would take me a right long time to think of all of them.

Q. Any of them you can think of now?

A. Jim Goodwin.

Q. Is he a one-armed man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he an officer?

A. He was a Captain, Goodwin.

Q. One-armed fellow?

A. One hand.

Q. Where does he live now, Jim Goodwin?

A. I don't know, he was mine foreman at Ottawa when I knew him.

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Q. Had he been working at that time? Was he a mine foreman at this time?

A. Indeed I couldn't say.

Q. How long before that did you see him?

A. It wasn't so very long before that.

Q. Did he have a gun? A. Yes, sir.

Q. What kind of a gun did he have?

A. It was some kind of high power rifle.

Q. Now, name somebody else you saw on that trip? Well, we had better examine these other witnesses. Suppose you go in there and study and tell us how many you know.

THE WITNESS: I hereby authorize the stenographer and Notary to sign my name, to have the same effect as if I had signed it in person.

Foster E. Wilson
By Stenographer and Notary.

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A. M. McCOMAS, another witness of lawful age, being by me first duly sworn, deposed as follows:

BY MR. OSENTON.

Q. Your name is A. M. McComas? A. Yes, sir.

Q. How old are you Mr. McComas?

A. I will soon be 51 years old.

Q. Where is your postoffice address now?

A. My postoffice address now is Morrisvale.

Q. Lincoln County or Boone?

A. Boone County, I think. On what they call the Dotson Fork.

Q. Were you living at Morrisvale in Boone County, when the Logan trouble occurred?

A. No, sir, I was living at Androsin, in Lincoln County.

Q. What were you doing there at that time?

A. Working in the mine.

Q. Were you at Marmet at anytime while the men were assembled there?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you know Frank Keeney and Fred Mooney?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know William Pettry?

A. Well, I don't know whether I would or not.

Q. Do you know Blizzard. Bill Blizzard?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where was he living at that time, the same place you were or near there?

A. In Kanawha County, I guess. I don't know.

Q. During the trouble, when the men were assembled up there in Blair along in the mountain, trying to go to Logan County, did you see any of the men going to this point or by there?

A. Yes, sir, I seen men going up the river.

Q. Armed, were they armed men?

A. Some were armed and some wasn't.

Q. Did you go up to where these men were camped on Blair Mountain?

A. No, sir, I never was up there.

Q. Did you have any part in it?

A. Well now, when I was there at home I was protecting my own stuff and the company's stuff.

Q. What company is that?

A. Boone County Coal Corporation.

Q. It belongs to Mr. Wiley?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. That is not very far from where the men had their headquarters to go to Blair Mountain?

A. I never was back there after Sunday morning, as soon as I come in there and got my truck. My family had done left there, I come in and got my truck and went down the river. I never was there after the first trouble started.

Q. Did you see any of these men that were armed. Do you know any of them?

A. I don't know whether I did or not. I seen a lot that was armed and a lot that wasn't armed, and I couldn't be positive who was armed and who wasn't, I seen a thousand men or more that wasn't armed at all.

Q. What did you hear them say?

A. I never had any conversation with any of them. I was down here three days during that trouble.

Q. Before you came down, what did you hear?

A. I come down on Monday.

Q. What did you hear any of these thousand, say regardless of whether you knew them or not.

A. I heard them talking something about them people coming in there and killing two men, the Saturday night of the killing. Said they were going to take action, they wanted to keep them out of there.

Q. What did you hear them saying about going to Mingo County?

A. I didn't hear them say anything.

Q. What did you hear them say in regard to Don Chafin, or his deputies?

A. I heard them say they wanted to keep him from coming back in and killing any of the miners there.

Q. Did they say why they were going to Mingo?

A. I don't remember as I heard anything about it.

Q. Can you name any of the men you saw in this thousand men that you knew?

A. Well, I don't know. I seed more than thataround.

Q. In all that you saw marching up there, armed or unarmed, can you name any of them that you know?

A. Well, I don't know. They were pretty nearly all strangers to me.

Q. Do you know any of them? They were not all strangers, were they?

A. No, I don't guess they were.

Q. Can you name any of them that you knew?

A. I would not be positive about any of them.

Q. Well, do you remember during that time seeing Bill Blizzard up there? What was he doing?

A. I seen Bill Blizzard there one time in a car at Jeffery.

Q. Who was with him? A. I don't remember.

Q. Wastthat while the men were armed there or not?

A. I don't remember whether there were any armed men at Jeffery at that time or not.

Q. Well, it was after the invasion started?

A. Yes, sir, it was after that.

Q. Wasn't he a kind of captain. Didn't he seem to have charge of them?

A. I don't know, that might have been after the soldiers come there.

Q. Did you see Keeney and Mooney up there before the soldiers come?

A. No, sir, I never seen Keeney and Mooney up there after that at all.

Q. Do you belong to the local up there?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Wasn't this matter discussed in the local before these men came up to Marmet?

A. Well, there was something said about-- about the way

them people was doing over in Mingo, killing them fellows over there.

Q. What were they going to do about that?

Q. They were getting up resolutions to send to the Governor to try to get something done about it.

Q. Didn't they appoint a committee in that very local to buy arms and ammunition?

A. Not any time that I was there, they didn't. Now, they had meetings when I was working, but I don't know about them.

Q. Wasn't there a number of men right from that very place that took guns and went up to Blair Mountain with that crowd?

A. No, I couldn't say about that. Most everybody left out of there on Sunday morning. Of course, there were some went back there, but I don't know whether they staid up there on Beech or not.

Q. Are you one of the McComas's that is indicted in Logan?

A. Yes, sir, I am indicted in eight cases. Four in the name of A.M. McComas and four in the name of Sonny McComas.

THE WITNESS: I hereby authorize the stenographer and Notary to sign my name, to have the same effect as if signed in person.

A. M. McComas

By Stenographer and Notary.

MARION H. RICHARDSON
SHORTHAND REPORTER
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

COUNTY OF CABELL, TO-WIT:

I, Marion H. Richardson, a Notary Public within and for Cabell County in the State of West Virginia, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing depositions of Foster Elmer Wilson and A.M. McC mas, were duly taken by me in stenographic characters or notes, the said witnesses being by me first duly sworn; that said stenographic characters and notes were correctly taken, and were written out in full, and accurately and correctly transcribed into the English language by me to the best of my ability; that the same were taken at the office of Litz-Smith Fuel Company, Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia; that the signatures of said witnesses were signed to said depositions by me, under authority given me at the time of taking same.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of December, 1921.

My commission expires May 7th, 1931.

Marion H. Richardson
Notary Public, Cabell County,
West Virginia.